



ANNUAL REPORT FOR CLAYDON AND BARHAM RECREATION GROUND

Spring 2024

A relatively quiet year with the usual footballing activities taking place followed by the annual refresh of the main football pitch. Topsoil has been added to the main areas of wear and it is intended to put some grass seed out as well.

On the subject of grass, Vertas have continued to cut the grass despite being told that their services were no longer required. Taking legal advice, it has come to light that their contract can only be terminated on two occasions during its life. This opportunity was missed during 2023 / 2024 due to a lack of understanding of the Terms and Conditions, but the contract will be terminated for the 2024 / 2025 grass cutting year.

Our thanks go to NSK Landscapes for their tolerance of the turmoil created by this restrictive clause in the Vertas contract.

We have looked into trimming back the edges of the small football pitch to see if that could be used on a more formal basis, however, we have been advised that the area would still be too small to be used formally, even for juniors.

After the success of the 2023 Fun Day, it has been decided to try and make this an annual event. In 2023 it is estimated that about 600 people attended and for the second year running the Pizza van ran out of dough. The 2024 Fun Day will take place on Monday 6th May 12.00 to 16.00. The band that was so popular last year has been hired again with the Pizza van, The Chequers mobile bar and a hog roast all planned as well as the bouncy castles and face painting for the children. Our thanks to Claydon Parish Council for providing financial support for these events.

The annual safety inspection of the extended play equipment has taken place with recommendations regarding the condition and upkeep of some of the equipment. These recommendations fell into the minor or very minor categories and have been programmed for attention in the coming months.

As part of our ongoing improvement of the Recreation Ground facilities, work has just started on our plans for a BMX or Pump cycle track. We have spoken to the contractor building new houses in Exeter Road and he has donated a large amount of soil to get us started. We had thought that the Community Pay-Back Team might have been able to create the track for us but unfortunately, they are not currently available. This will not deter us, and alternative means of construction are already being considered.

As part of the celebrations for the Queen's Jubilee and King Charles' Coronation a new bench has been installed in the Recreation Ground bringing the total of new benches to five. The Jubilee / Coronation bench was originally flanked by two Rowan trees, one of which has sadly not survived. We have contacted the Woodland Trust as part of our tree planting initiative and the donated trees



included Rowans. It is intended to replace the missing tree and plant others to the rear of the bench creating a Rowan tree bower around it.

Councillor David Penny has also been thanked for his donation of many tree tubes and stakes so that the remaining trees from the Woodland Trust can be planted and protected.

Being aware that the changing room building was showing its age, in particular the old wooden entrance doors, these have now been replaced with metal security doors being obtained and fitted. Our thanks to Suffolk Doors and Windows for supplying and fitting the new doors.

While these were being replaced the guttering has also been replaced and the fascias painted. For this our thanks go to James Morrall who has done an excellent job in the recent inclement weather. All of this is again with the financial support of Claydon Parish Council. Thank you to them.

In line with the increased security provided by the metal security doors on the changing room building it is intended to install CCTV cameras as Anti-Social Behaviour still impacts on our ability to improve facilities by diverting part of the budget to repairs created by vandals.

We sometimes get engagement from the public with suggestions of things that would like to see at the Recreation Ground. Some of these we can do, BMX track construction, Play Area uplift and expansion, and some we can't do. In the latter category are Secure Dog Park, Public Conveniences, Secure Carpark.

The dog park would require an area fenced off within the existing grounds thus potentially depriving the greater public of some of the facility, the area would need to be monitored by volunteers or employed/contracted persons and the cost of fencing anything worthwhile would be astronomical. This does not also encompass the myriad regulations that have to be conformed to around such a venture.

Public conveniences, whilst these facilities exist within the changing rooms there is again the need for someone to monitor their use, lock and unlock at each end of the day, and someone to provide at least daily cleaning. It is unlikely that anyone would be prepared to volunteer for this duty and there is not enough budget to employ someone or get someone on contract.

Finally the secure carpark. This would also require someone to unlock early in the day for the school run, bin collection and refuse collections plus locking again at night. As with both of the above suggestions it is unlikely that volunteers to carry this out could be found and the budget would not allow for someone to be employed or be on contract.

We no longer play host to the Coffee Station, although they will be attending the Fun Day, as the small amount of foot traffic no longer made it a viable proposition and a more lucrative option became available. We still see the refill van on a monthly basis, and they seem happy to continue.

We have a litter picker on contract to tidy up the Recreation Ground and clean the changing rooms on a weekly basis and we have some generous folk who will litter pick on an *ad hoc* basis should the need arise. We don't know who does this impromptu tidy up, but we are very grateful for their efforts.

Thanks go to all of the Committee Members and the two Parish Councils for their support and active participation.